This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

In the Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A method ~~of handing off a mobile terminal from a first network served by a first access device to a second network served by a second access device,~~ comprising the steps of: (1) sending an authorization inquiry from ~~the~~ a first access ~~device~~ router to ~~the~~ a second access ~~device~~ router including an identifier that identifies the mobile terminal; (2) querying a database maintained by a home network associated with the mobile terminal to determine whether the mobile terminal is authorized to be handed off to the second access ~~device~~ router by sending the authorization inquiry from the second access router to an administrative server associated with the second network and sending the authorization inquiry from the administrative server associated with the second network to a home server of the home network that accesses the database; (3) in response to determining that the mobile terminal is authorized to be handed off to the second access ~~device~~ router, performing a handoff operation from the first access ~~device~~ router to the second access ~~device~~ router~~, wherein the second access device then has full control over the connection with the terminal~~; and (4) in response to determining that the mobile terminal is not authorized to be handed off to the second access ~~device~~ router, inhibiting the handoff operation from the first access ~~device~~ router to the second access ~~device~~ router.

2. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein step (3) comprises the step of transferring context information from the first access ~~device~~ router to the second access ~~device~~ router.

3. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein steps (1) through (4) are performed without allocating any radio frequency resources of the second access ~~device~~ router to communicate with the mobile terminal until after it is determined that the mobile terminal is authorized to be handed off to the second access ~~device~~ router.

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4. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein step (2) comprises the step of querying the database on the basis of a list of access ~~devices~~ routers that are authorized to accept handoffs from the mobile terminal.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein step (2) comprises the step of querying the database to determine authorization based on a time of day.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein step (2) comprises the step of querying the database on the basis of a membership plan associated with a subscriber of the mobile terminal.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein step (2) comprises the step of querying the database on the basis of dynamic loading conditions.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of modifying the database on the basis of dynamic loading conditions, such that authorization is dependent upon dynamic loading conditions.

9. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein steps (1) to (4) are conducted between access ~~devices~~ routers that use same access technology.

10. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein steps (1) to (4) are conducted between access ~~devices~~ routers that use heterogeneous access technologies.

11. (Cancelled) The method of claim 1, wherein step (2) comprises the steps of: (a) sending the authorization inquiry to an administrative server associated with the second network;

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and (b) sending the authorization inquiry from the administrative server to a home server that accesses the database.

12. (Currently amended) The method of claim ~~11~~ 1, wherein steps ~~(a) and (b) are~~ (2) is performed using the DIAMETER protocol.

13. (Currently amended) The method of claim ~~11~~ 1, wherein steps ~~(a) and (b) are~~ (2) is performed using the Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) protocol.

14. (Currently amended) An access router that serves mobile terminals within a service area, comprising a processor that performs the steps of: (1) receiving from another access router that serves a different service area a request for authorization information concerning a mobile terminal that is a candidate for a handoff operation; (2) sending the authorization information to an administrative server associated with the second network for transmittal from the administrative server associated with the access router to a home server of the home network that accesses the database and causing a database maintained by a home network associated with the mobile terminal to be queried to determine whether the access router is authorized to accept a handoff operation for the mobile terminal; (3) in response to determining that the mobile terminal is authorized to be handed off to the access router, performing a handoff operation with the another access router~~, wherein the access router then has full control over the connection with the terminal~~; and (4) in response to determining that the mobile terminal is not authorized to be handed off to the access router, inhibiting the handoff operation with the another access router.

15. (Original) The access router of claim 14, wherein step (3) comprises the step of transferring context information from the another access router to the access router.

16. (Currently amended) The access router of claim 14, wherein steps (1) through (4)

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are performed without allocating any radio frequency resources of the access ~~device~~ router to communicate with the mobile terminal until after it is determined that the mobile terminal is authorized to be handed off to the access ~~device~~ router.

17. (Currently amended) The access router of claim 14, wherein step (2) comprises the step of querying the database on the basis of a list of access ~~devices~~ routers th at are authorized to accept handoffs ~~from~~ of the mobile terminal.

18. (Original) The access router of claim 14, wherein step (2) comprises the step of querying the database to determine authorization that is dependent on a time of day.

19. (Original) The access router of claim 14, wherein step (2) comprises the step of querying the database on the basis of a membership plan associated with a subscriber of the mobile terminal.

20. (Original) The access router of claim 14, wherein step (2) comprises the step of querying the database on the basis of dynamic loading conditions.

21. (Original) The access router of claim 14, further comprising the step of providing information concerning current loading conditions to the database, such that authorization is dependent upon dynamic loading conditions.

22. (Original) The access router claim 14, wherein the access router serves mobile terminals using Internet Protocol.

23. (Original) The access router of claim 14, wherein the access router uses a different access technology than the another access router from which the candidate handoff is to be performed.

24. (Original) The access router of claim 23, wherein the access router uses wireless LAN technology, and wherein the another access router uses GPRS technology.

25. (Original) The access router of claim 14, wherein the access router uses the same access technology as the another access router from which the candidate handoff is to be performed.

26. (Cancelled) The access router of claim 14, wherein step (2) comprises the step of sending an authorization inquiry to a home server associated with the mobile terminal.

27. (Currently amended) The access router of claim ~~26~~ 14 , wherein step (2) is performed using the DIAMETER protocol.

28. (Currently amended) The access router of claim ~~26~~ 14 , wherein step (2) is performed using the Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) protocol.

29. (Currently amended) A method ~~of handing off a mobile terminal from a first network served by a first access device to a second network served by a second access device,~~ comprising the steps of: (1) prior to initiating a handoff operation of a mobile terminal from a first network served by a first access router to a second network served by a second access router, ~~with the second access device,~~ sending an authorization inquiry from the first access ~~device~~ router to an administrative server associated with the first network; (2) sending the authorization inquiry from the administrative server associated with the first network to a home server of a home network associated with the mobile terminal, the authorization inquiry including an identifier that identifies the mobile terminal; (~~2~~ 3) receiving a result of a database query from the home network, wherein the result of the database query indicates whether the mobile terminal is authorized to be handed off to the second access ~~device~~ router ; (~~3~~ 4) in

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response to determining that the mobile terminal is authorized to be handed off to the second access ~~device~~ router, performing a handoff operation from the first access ~~device~~ router to the second access ~~device~~ router~~, wherein the second access device then has full control over the connection with the terminal~~; and ([4] 5) in response to determining that the mobile terminal is not authorized to be handed off to the second access ~~device~~ router, inhibiting the handoff operation from the first access device to the second access ~~device~~ router.

30. (Currently amended) The method of claim 29, wherein step (~~2~~ 3) comprises the step of receiving a result that depends on dynamic loading conditions associated with the second access ~~device~~ router.

31. (Currently amended) The method of claim 29, wherein step (~~2~~ 3) comprises the step of receiving a result corresponding to querying the database to determine authorization based on a time of day.

32. (Currently amended) The method of claim 29, wherein step (~~2~~ 3) comprises the step of receiving a result corresponding to querying the database on the basis of a membership plan associated with a subscriber of the mobile terminal.

33. (Currently amended) The method of claim 29, wherein step (~~2~~ 3) comprises the step of receiving a result corresponding to querying the database on the basis of dynamic loading conditions.

34. (Currently amended) The method of claim 29, wherein steps (1) to (4) are performed without allocating any radio frequency resources for communicating between the second access ~~device~~ router and the mobile terminal until after it has been determined that the mobile terminal is authorized to be handed off to the second access ~~device~~ router.

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35. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the administrative server associated with the second network comprises an authentication, authorization and accounting (AAA) server.

36. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the administrative server associated with the second network comprises a Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) server.

37. (New) The method of claim 29, wherein the administrative server associated with the first network comprises an authentication, authorization and accounting (AAA) server.

38. (New) The method of claim 29, wherein the administrative server associated with the first network comprises a Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) server.

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